Summary. Specific requirements of modern consumer-tourists, competition, new sciences and technology have led to the emergence of new products and services in a modern hotel business as well as prescription of training and development standards for employees and managers in the hotel groups and independent hotels of higher rank. Every serious hotel, in order to survive on the tourist market, must have a separate program (standard) of training and development for employees and managers. General hotel management, particularly human resource management, is fully responsible for the development and implementation of the program (standard) of training and development of employees and managers. In this paper, I will write about the basic features of modern hospitality and fundamental stages of training and development of hotel employees and managers. In a particular part, I will write about front office department and training and development standards of front office employees and managers.

Keywords: hotel managements, training, development, employees, managers, reception

1. INTRODUCTION

Changes in market concepts, technology, organization and management have resulted in the emergence of the need for training and development of employees in the modern hotel industry. Training, as the process of acquiring new knowledge and skills necessary to perform duties and tasks, must represent an important strategy in business policy of general management and human resources management. The development of employees and managers, as well as acquiring new knowledge and skills necessary for more complex and demanding tasks, are an important intellectual capital in the hotel business. For any serious hotel facility, training and development of employees and managers represents building competitive advantage because any investment in knowledge and skills development becomes the most effective way of investing in hotel products and services quality.

2. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY HOTEL INDUSTRY

‘The term hotel industry implies the part of hospitality industry that is specialized in providing accommodation services, whose main representatives are hotels, motels, aparthotels, resort tourist suites and pensions.’ (Marošević, I., 2011). ‘Hotel industry (in economic way in market conditions with the goal of realizing commercial effects) offers accommodation and other hotel services in hotelier way, in order to meet the needs and motives of guests (visitors) and ensure security of life standard to the staff and management’ (Cerović, Z., 2003). ‘During a temporary stay in the hotels facilities in chosen destinations, hotels offer rest and relaxation to tourists, achieving business contacts to business people, conditions for constructive work to participants of congresses, seminars and various other professional, scientific and political gatherings, exploration of natural attractions and cultural and historical monuments to hikers and tourists; and services of food and beverages to local people, as well as various entertainment contents’ (Bunja, Đ., 2008). Contemporary needs, requirements and desires of the consumer – tourist (greater need for preserving health, emphasis on ecology and healthy food,
stay in pure nature, the growing demand for convention facilities and incentive offer, visits to big sport, cultural, religious, and business events) led to the creation of new products and services in the hotel industry. Current products and services include:

a) Wellness&spa services (wellness&spa philosophy includes: face and body care, health promotion with various wellness&spa methods, mental training and special wellness diet)

b) All inclusive’ products and services (rich integral buffet breakfast, lunch and dinner, afternoon and late night snack and a variety of sports and recreational facilities)

c) Redesign of hotel rooms and suites (contemporary consumer likes to stay in the newly renovated rooms and suites)

d) Hotel animation (every serious resort hotel, if wanting to meet modern demands and needs of tourists, has to pay special attention to this important part by drawing up a variety of attractive and entertaining contents for all age groups)

e) Websites and online booking (the website which hotels introduce themselves on to guests are getting richer and have more contents, and offer the possibility of online searches and reliable hotel services and products booking)

f) Ecology (contemporary consumers are becoming more socially and environmentally conscious so they want to know all environmental policies that hotels have, and in which ways they help the community and that way they return the money they earn)

Based on the above mentioned, it can be concluded that the modern hotel standards stand out from other related activities in the sphere of accommodation services by constant maintenance of quality and by introducing new types of services, all in order to increase the quality of basic services and meeting the accommodation needs of the modern consumer.

3. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS OF MODERN HOTEL EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS

Specific needs of the modern consumers-tourists, competition and new sciences and technology have led to prescribing standards of training and development of employees and managers in the hotel affiliations and independent hotels of lower or higher categories. Hotel management, particularly the management of human resources, is fully responsible for standardization, i.e. the design and implementation process of training and development of employees and managers. ‘Basic groups of activities and tasks, and specific (sub)functions included in human resources management are: strategic management of human resources, staff planning, duties analysis and design, selection of candidates, monitoring and performance evaluation, motivation and rewarding, training and development of employees, creating appropriate organizational climate and culture, social and health protection, labour relations, and a variety of services for employees.’ (Bahtijarević-Šiber,F.,1999).

The process of training and development is a complex character and can be divided into four main phases: analysis of training and development needs, training and development drafting, implementation of training and development program and evaluation of completed training and development.

1. Training and development needs analysis includes: identification of actual knowledge and skills of new hotel employees and he need for additional (professional) training of already employed (old) staff and managers. Human resources management is responsible for these activities, and it has the obligation to inform the general management about analysis results of training and development needs.

2. Training program drafting stems from the previously conducted analysis on the basis of which human resources management and
general management determine the following: objectives and contents of training and development of employees and managers, the program (standard) of training and development of employees and managers and methods of training and development of employees and managers.

3. Implementation of training and development of employees program is long and continuous process which include: a variety of methods of training new employees (individual instructions, apprenticeships, internships, mentoring) and various methods of development of old employees and managers (professional trips, lectures, seminars, conferences).

4. Evaluation of training and development of employees represents the control of realization of objectives and programs, as well as evaluation of trainees satisfaction (of new and old employees and managers)

Hotel standard of training and development represent an increase in knowledge and skills of employees and managers, and increased efficiency and competitiveness in a demanding tourist market to hotel facility.

4. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR FRONT OFFICE EMPLOYEES IN MODERN HOTEL INDUSTRY

‘The task of front office department in a hotel is to ensure all prerequisites for optimal utilization of accommodation, maximum satisfaction of needs and desires of guests regarding accommodation or other services while staying in a hotel.’ (Kralj,B., Štefanec,M., Štefanec,J., Gavranić, D., 2001). Front office department is of great importance because of functions it performs and its influence on the financial success of the business. The business scope of the front office depends on: the type of the hotel, the intensity of capacity utilization (especially in accommodation) and periods in which hotel operates (seasonally or throughout the year). Duties and work assignments of front office in hotels of higher rank define standard organization of the department: management (front office director, front office deputy director), reception (receptionist, check-in attendant), reservations department (reservation attendant, correspondent), telecommunication services department (telephone operator) box-office/exchange (treasurer, exchange clerk, billing clerk), main lobby (day and night door attendant, porter, concierge, elevator attendant, greeter). Duties of the reception department can be divided into four groups:

1. Services prior to arrival (marketing activities, booking, business correspondence, arranging...)
2. Services upon arrival (determining rooms, reception of guests and taking personal documents, escorting guests to rooms or suites, opening the accounts...)
3. Services during guest’s stay (wake-up calls, messages and parcel delivering, expenses tracking, organizing trips...)
4. Services on departure (hotel service charges, escorting guests to the exit from the hotel, transfer services...)

Due to specific requirement of the modern consumer-tourist, new trends and competition, front office department in hotel groups and independent hotels of lower or higher ranks prescribe specific standards for the training and development of employees. Head receptionist and human resources management are fully responsible for development and implementation of those programs (standards). The training of employees of the front desk department must be realized through the following basic steps:

1. Introduction to personal hygiene and dress code of the hotel.
2. Introduction to organizational affiliation standard. ‘Employees often share their dissatisfaction with the administration, personal income, personal relationships working hours with guests, especially those guests they have established close relationship with. It is an extremely unprofessional approach to business, which tarnishes company’s reputation, and employee’s personal reputation as well.’ (Tomašević, A., Kalinić, M., Bareza, S., 2009).

3. Introduction to behaviour towards hotel guests standard. ‘The guest is the most important person in the hotel, towards whom the respect and politeness should be shown in every circumstance and in every area.’ (Galičić, V., Ivanović, S., Lupić, M., 2006). ‘When a guest makes and observation, complaint or praise, he/she has to be heard with respect.’ (Galičić, V., Laškarin, M., 2011).

4. Introduction to communication among employees standard. ‘Communication among employees is considered to be the part of the work, which aims to create high level of good interpersonal relations among employees.’ (Marošević, I., 2003).

5. Introduction to working position within the front office department. Front office director is fully responsible for this phase and is responsible for providing mentors for new employees. The program of development for existing employees of front office department must contain:
   1. Various study and professional trips
   2. Second language improving
   3. Various seminars in the sales psychology, communication culture, modern marketing activities and quality in hospitality
   4. Different hotel and tourism congresses and conferences. Standards of training and development for front office department employees have to represent the part of the business strategy of every serious management in contemporary hotel industry because front office department is where the first and the last contact with hotel guest is established and the information centre during guest’s stay at the hotel.

5. CONCLUSION

Due to the specific requirements and needs of consumers and tough competition in the demanding tourism market, standards of training and development for employees have to become an important component of the mission, vision and goals of each entity in modern hotel industry. General hotel management in collaboration with the human resources department has to develop programs of training and development for every hotel department and systematically monitor the implementation thereof through prescribed stages. General hotel management must identify appropriate training and development programs for every hotel department because each one has a number of business specifics. General hotel management, especially the human resources department, must develop a special program (standard) of training and development for front office department because it includes a variety of complex tasks prior to guest’s arrival and during guest’s stay at the hotel.

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